



# Department of Justice

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## **TWO DEFENDANTS PLEAD GUILTY IN ATM SKIMMING SCHEME**

### ***Defendants Were Part of Criminal Crew That Stole Account Information from Nearly 400 Bank Customers***

Atlanta, GA - ROMULUS BACIAN, 40, and MARIUS ENACHE CSAPAY, 45, both of Romania, pleaded guilty today to their roles in a conspiracy to steal ATM/debit card account information from hundreds of Washington Mutual customers using “skimming” equipment they illegally affixed to ATMs around the metro Atlanta area.

“Illegal skimming for personal gain is a ‘high tech’ crime and we have adapted our technology and assets to further the investigations of this specific type of electronic crime. With assistance from our local, state and federal law enforcement partners, those individuals and organized groups who engage in ATM fraud and skimming will be fully investigated, apprehended, and face federal prison,” said Jeffrey Gilbert, Special Agent in Charge of the United States Secret Service in Atlanta.

According to Acting United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates, the charges and other information presented in court: Beginning in the fall of 2007 and continuing through July 2008, BACIAN, CSAPAY, and co-conspirators GABRIEL CIRLAN and NICOLAE DRASOVIAN installed illegal skimming devices on Washington Mutual automated teller machines (ATM’s) in the metro Atlanta area. When a customer used an ATM card to enter the vestibule in which the ATM was located, the skimming device, which was placed over the normal card reader in the door, electronically recorded the customer’s debit card number. Meanwhile, a small camera installed above the actual ATM recorded the ATM keyboard as the customer entered his or her password. The conspirators collected the skimmer and the camera at the end of the day and married the account data with the passwords to create complete account access.

CIRLAN encoded stolen, unactivated American Express gift cards with the account information and used the gift cards as proxies for actual debit cards to withdraw funds from the compromised accounts. During the course of the conspiracy, it is estimated that the conspirators stole more than \$200,000.

On July 26, 2008, Lawrenceville police officers caught CSAPAY, BACIAN, and DRASOVIAN while they were in the process of removing skimming equipment from a Washington Mutual ATM. CIRLAN was subsequently arrested in Tennessee, where he remains in custody, facing charges in another federal identity theft case. DRASOVIAN is a fugitive, believed to be in Romania. Anyone with information concerning DRASOVIAN is asked to call the United States Secret Service or the FBI.

A sentencing date has not yet been set for BACIAN and CSAPAY before United States District Judge Richard W. Story. They both face a minimum term of two years in federal prison and a maximum term of up to 22 years in federal prison. In determining the actual sentence, the Court will consider the United States Sentencing Guidelines, which are not binding but provide appropriate sentencing ranges for most offenders. Both defendants are also subject to deportation from the United States following the completion of their sentences.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the United States Secret Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with assistance from the Lawrenceville Police Department.

Assistant United States Attorney Robert C. McBurney is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact Sally Q. Yates, Acting United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is [www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan).